

["Nick"]

Copy 1

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NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Fred Romanofsky

ADDRESS 8640 Bay Parkway Brooklyn, N.Y.

DATE Jan. 10, 1939

SUBJECT "Nick"

1. Date and time of interview ON several consecutive days in months of Dec. and Jan.
2. Place of interview 11th St. on sidewalk
3. Name and address of informant "Nick"
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Fred Romanofsky

ADDRESS 8640 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn

DATE January 10, 1939

SUBJECT NICK

1. Ancestry Italian-American
2. Place and date of birth New York City
3. Family Low income
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates Primary grade
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities Catholic
9. Description of informant Included in story
10. Other Points gained in interview

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Fred Romanofsky

ADDRESS 8640 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y.

DATE January 10, 1939

SUBJECT "NICK"

Nick is seven.

"Yeah, seven. So what? Bet I know as much as Dog Feet, Bally Balls, Chimbo, or the Jew-boy, or Oriental Charley (we call him that 'cause he's got long pants and looks Chinese), Shorty or Boze! Aw go on, leave my hat alone!"

Nick is small, wiry, and muscular. His natural olive complexion is tinted with a paleness common to many of his playmates. He is tough and a scrapper for fun's sake what ever the cost may be. He is a vassal among older boys and a lord among his own.

Society has a definite pattern in Nick's mind. It's organized on a "gang" basis according to age groupings with a "boss" at the head of each group.

"You gotta have a boss. My boss, he's just like me - seven years. He knows everything and tells us all what to do and teaches us things and watches us. He teaches us new games and we gotta pay him something for it - oh, anything we got. When he seen me with some candy, he runs after me and grabs the candy out off my hand and throws it on

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the ground in the dirt so's I won't pick it up. Then when I run away, he picks it up, wipes it, and kisses God just like that (places fingers of left hand on mouth, looks up in the sky, and blows a kiss) 2 and eats the candy as if it's his."

"See that man over there - he's the "boss" of the whole block! He does favors for everyone all the time. He's a good guy to all the kids. Guess he's coming over here."

The slim tailored young man walked over to us and listened for a while to the conversation.

"Why don't you pay them something for talkin' to you? It's worth something to you ain't it? Give them two-bits or something."

The children looked from the "boss" to me with undisguised surprise written all over their features. Why should they be paid just for talkin'? The "boss" turned neatly on his heels walked up the block satisfied that he "took care of the street."

"There goes my "boss"! Nick broke the silence.

"He's not a boss, he's a chief." some one cut in.

"Well, what's a chief, if not a boss?" Nick shouted back indignantly.

"See that guy over there? "He's a "fag". He's got three sisters. They "goose" him all the time. He walks from his hips down. "Oh, dear," he says all the time. In the school yard one day everybody called him a "fag" so they gathered around him and wouldn't let him go till he began to bawl and now the principal don't let him play in the yard no more. A baby could knock him out - that high."

"What would I like?" "I like to see an actress when she gets out off bed with no make-up and junk on."

"No, he don't mean that. What would you like to be?"

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"It don't make no difference, we'll end up in the gutter and in the slums anyway." he paused, "I don't know why, but that's how it is."

"I like to live here. We have lots of fun here-more than on Park Avenue. I don't wanna live on Park Avenue if we have homes like theirs here."

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"Look who's talkin'! The dump cleaner, and he doesn't wanna live on Park Avenue!" Nick put his two cents worth and in return received a slap and a well placed kick in the rear.

"God damn you!" Nick cursed as he made his get away.

"You're gonna die if you say that, Nick." someone shouted.

"What do I care, smarty. God don't help you anyway if you need something right away. He only helps when you are sick-like and I'm not sick. I'm Cat'lick anyway."

"Nick's gonna be gangster just like the rob ers the cops got when there was a bank robbery around the corner."

"I dunnow." Nick answered, "When I grow up I wanna get a job, but you have to be good to get a job, but I guess I'll look for it. Come on lets play war." H made a snowball and threw it at the biggest of the boys. "a "War is declared!"

"You jack ass. You don't declare war anymore." a twelve year old shouted as he threw a well placed shot at Nick. The snow landed square on Nick's face. He made a wry smile, wiped off the tears, and joined the "war" in earnest.